

Nashville Union

W. CAMERON & CO., Publishers.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1864.

Persons writing to this Office to subscribe to the Union, or on any other business, should address their letters to

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A CIVILIZED WAR POLICY.

The brave can afford to be generous. It is generosity which makes a brave man better than a brave brute. Periodically drops from the crown of its bright jewel; for handful will fight for purposes, and cannibals for human flesh. The brave Christian soldier fights to defend free government and uphold equal and just laws. He delights neither in carnage nor pillage, but takes the sword and the spear to drive oppression and tyranny from the plow and the pruning hook. He goes to war that he may secure to posterity the blessing of peace. And he wages war not against peaceful men, and village, and farm houses; but against forts, breastworks, and intrenchments; not against quondam non-combatants—ill-tempered old men, feeble old women, and inconsiderate boys and girls; but against men in arms to destroy the Government. He will not burn the mansion of a feeble woman in Tennessee, because her lawless son is bearing arms against his country in Georgia or Alabama; but besides the natural repugnance he feels towards an act so cruel, his good sense suggests, that it would give the avowed rebel a pretext to malign the national authority; and he reflects, that in forbearing he serves his comrades in arms, while sparing the country's disgrace and a non-combatant's misery; for the house may shelter a sick or wounded soldier in the hour of greatest need. He will not wantonly burn the fence of a farmer, and kill his stock, first because he has no delight in needless destruction of anything, and secondly because he reflects, that a time may arise in the exigencies of war when, from the interruption of supplies, a surplus of provisions in the country may be the salvation of the army. In short, he inflicts no injury upon person or property, save such as may be required to weaken the enemy in arms.

When our conquering armies first entered this portion of Tennessee, in 1862, most of the officers as well as the soldiers in the ranks, seemed to act on the principles set forth in the paragraph above. For so large a body of armed men, perhaps they were never exalted in good order and respect for property. And their gallant bearing was the more praiseworthy, because at that time rebels sympathizing non-combatants were less respectful in their demeanor than at present. Their orderly conduct extorted praise from the mouths of bitter rebels; and it made the loyal residents of the country feel proud. Has there been any change of demeanor? Let facts answer. But whose fault is it, if there is less order and more of destruction and pillage? Some, who care not whose house is burned, because they think their own is secure, or because they have none, will grow black in the face and swear the ill-natured rebels brought it on themselves. It must be confessed, some of them acted in a manner which lessens their claim upon our sympathy; but their conduct did not produce the change of deportment; for most of the bitterness have long since become lamb-like in their conduct, whereas, our tendency in the wrong direction increases as they show signs of reformation. It is not because our soldiers are less brave, or less generous; for many of them are ashamed of the devastation which marks the course of our armies.

The crying evil results from a diseased public sentiment—sentiment which pervades the entire country, and, by pressing, as it were from without upon the army, forces the worst elements to the surface. Doubtless there are just as many good men in the ranks of our armies as there were two years ago; but a flood of rapacity and audacity has swept over the country outside the army. Brutal words have become fashionable with politicians; they drip like exuding poison from the pens of hired scribblers, and from those of many who, though not hired to write, are impelled thereto by a fondness for seeing their thoughts in print. Roving adventurers, who in fact care as little for their Government as they do for that of Hindooostan, but who follow the army with special license to fleece soldier and citizen alike, being convinced that shrim-making is a lucrative business, are anxious to try out everywhere, Great is Diana of Destruction! To get the key-note, they search the newspapers, and find something like this: "He's a d—d rebel; give him his right." Thicking such expressions embody all the external evidences of patriotism (of their sort of patriotism, we do,) these disinterested patriots go back and forth making money and manufacturing popular slang. At trade points South, they are consequential persons; and having practiced so sharply as to make sudden fortunes, some of them who were merely vagrants before the war, can now manage to control the nominations in Congressional districts North. And they can influence appointments in the army. When men selected by such patriots are placed in the most commanding offices, is it not likely the worst elements of the army will become the ruling ones?

Mather too Much.

A returned prodigal made application to take the oath of Amnesty, a few days since; and after having been sworn, he asked if he was a voter now; adding immediately that if required to take the oath prescribed by Gov. Johnson, he would remain away from the polls, as he did not "ardently desire" the overthrow of the confederacy. Such men must be watched closely.

LUDICROUS—In Icetown, opposite St. Louis, which is built on the frozen river, during the "cold spell," a barkeper built a fire in his tent and sat before it all night. And when the fire thawed a hole in the ice, and the man fell in and has not yet reappeared. His assistant, a verdant Irish boy, was asked where the proprietor was, and replied: "Faith he's gone into the cellar."

ADVERTISED LETTERS.

List of Letters Remaining in the Nashville Post Office, Feb. 9th 1864—List No. 30.

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